

VZCZCXRO1803
OO RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHEG #0463 0761534
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 171534Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1929
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0146
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0273
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0430

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000463

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ELA AND IO/RHS (OSTERMEIER)
GENEVA FOR CASSAYRE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2029

TAGS: PHUM PREL UN EU UK EG

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES FOREIGN MINISTER ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION RESOLUTION

REF: A. OSTERMEIER-BERNS E-MAIL 3/13

1B. CAIRO 397
1C. STATE 20375

Classified By: Ambassador Margaret Scobey for reason 1.4 (b).

11. (C) On March 14, the Ambassador spoke to Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit regarding Egypt's tabling of a freedom of expression resolution at the current session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). She urged Egypt to withdraw its text to allow Canada to run a resolution at the June session of the council. The Ambassador underscored that the U.S. cannot accept language in the resolution undermining the freedom of expression, and pressed Aboul Gheit to separate defamation of religion from freedom of expression. The Foreign Minister replied that Egypt's problem is not with the U.S., but with Europe, he said, where people think they can defame "any prophet."

12. (C) Separately, European Commission (EC) Delegation Political Counselor Michael Ryan told us March 15 that he and the Swedish and Czech ambassadors demarshaled MFA Assistant Minister for International Organizations Naela Gabr March 11, urging the GOE not to run a freedom of expression resolution. Ryan said the EC was not able to make any headway with Gabr who claimed that the Africa Group, not the GOE, was driving the resolution.

13. (C) British Embassy officer told us March 15 that on March 12 she demarshaled MFA Deputy Director for Human Rights Mona El-Bahtimy who replied that because the EU decided to run the resolution on religious tolerance at the UNHRC March session, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Africa Group and the Non-Aligned Movement would table the freedom of expression resolution in March. El-Bahtimy made the same point to us on March 12.

SCOBAY